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Musical theatre revival at Crossley

FRANKI IKEMAN/ POSTMEDIA NETWORK

E.L. Crossley Secondary School student Connor Wilson rehearses for the upcoming production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Musical. See story and photos on page 2.

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UPFRONT

■ **THEATRE:** The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

PHOTOS BY **FRANKI IKEMAN**/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

E.L. Crossley Secondary School student Ben Combe rehearses for the upcoming production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Musical Monday.

E.L. Crossley Secondary School student Koldin Collie rehearses for the upcoming production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Musical on Monday.

E.L. Crossley Secondary School student Jillian Lambert rehearses for the upcoming production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Musical on Monday.

E.L. Crossley puts on first show in years

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

There is no shortage of laughter as students from E.L. Crossley Secondary School take to the stage for their production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

The musical follows six students through a spelling bee competition, with snippets and anecdotes from their personal lives as diverse as the words they must spell.

The musical is the first the school has bad in years, and director and teacher Jennifer Benson said she is really excited about bringing the show into the community.

The play features a large improvisation portion, drawing members of the audience right into the scene.

"What's really exciting about tbis show, the spelling bee, is that it has an element of improv in it. So we actually pull audience members onto the stage and they become a part of the show. So it's an awesome sort of flavour because then you see your own peers and/or colleagues up on stage," said Benson.

The small, talented cast of nine has pulled together to bring difficult harmonies, lots of charm and plenty of humour to a show that cast members say got off to a bit of a slow start.

Jillian Lambert plays Logainne Schwartzandgrubenniere. Lambert's character is the youngest competitor in the spelling bee, and with two fathers, has a lot of quirkiness and an understanding and acceptance for all people. Lambert said she really enjoys playing her.

"She has a speech impediment so she has a little bit of a lisp. She's quite the hilarious character. She feels a lot older than she actually is and acts a lot older than she actually is," Lambert said.

Koldin Collie, playing Leaf Coneybear, loves acting and says he is really excited that his school has a show this year.

"Our school is well-known for the athletic side of it so I think actually putting on a show is going to put our art side out more, maybe draw in some more people to the arts," said Collie.

Benson said that despite what the title might suggest, this is not a kids show, it's geared towards adults.

"It's very funny, it's very edgy, it's very witty, it's political at times, and it's just a whole lot of fun," she said.

The show continues May 8 and 9 starting at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $15 and can be purchased by calling the school at 905-892-2635 or email nancy.augustino@dsbn.org. Tickets will also be sold for cash at the Town of Pelham municipal office.

To meet the rest of the cast visit www.crossleydrama.weebly.com.

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Twitter: @Frankilkeman

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LOCALNEWS

■ CULTURE

Pelham Art Festival back Mother's Day weekend

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

The Pelham Art Festival is ready for its 29th year, which will see more than 70 artists, both new and returning, display their work at Pelham Arena Friday to Sunday.

Local artist John Gagne has attended the show for years, but this year will be his first showing his own work.

Gagne mostly paints animals and nature, and describes his work as showing the "chaotic process of nature," saying he takes a surreal approach with natural elements.

The Fenwick resident said that the festival is a great supporter of local artists and the show is a good networking tool.

Fellow Fenwick resident and artist Vanessa Brownbridge joins the festival for her fifth year. Brownbridge said the festival not only gives her the chance to present the work she dedicates her time to, but is an opportunity to connect with a lot of different people.

"I've met some wonderful, wonderful people from all over the place," Brownbridge said.

Frans Rood of Mississauga will also be returning to the festival this year with his decorative raku stone work. Rood has been doing raku, an ancient Japanese process which has been adapted in western culture, for 20 years.

Rood said that the festival is a great means for artists to gain exposure, and said that sales of his pieces has grown as a result.

Both Rood and Brownbridge (as well as artist Lloyd Wilson) have donated a piece of their work toward a raffle which will benefit Pelham Public Library and community arts projects.

Rood said that he was happy to donate his work because he likes people to have his pieces, and if it also generates revenue for the library, he's all for it.

As with every year, the festival has donated $10,000 to Pelham Public Library, allowing the libraries to purchase things and complete projects they wouldn't normally be able to with their budget. The Pelham Art Festival has donated $375,000 to date.

Library CEO Kirk Weaver said the money allows the Fonthill and Fenwick branches to continue to be community and cultural hubs.

Heidi Tebrake, chair of the festival, said it continues to support the libraries because art and culture goes together.

One of the projects the money has helped to see life is the Festival Room at the library's Fonthill branch, which gives local artists a space to show and sell their work.

The festival will kick off with opening night celebrations at 7 p.m. on Friday, when guests will have the opportunity to meet some of the artists and enjoy catering by culinary arts students from Confederation secondary school.

The festival will feature a scavenger hunt for kids, local musicians and food from Salvador Deli.

franki.ikeman@sunmedia.ca

PHOTOS BY FRANKI IKEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Heidi Tebrake, chairperson of the Pelham Art Festival presents a cheque to Kirk Weaver, CEO of the Pelham Public Libraries on Tuesday April 21, 2015 in Welland, Ont. The Art Festival donates $10,000 of their proceeds to the libraries every year.

From left, artists John Gagne, Vanessa Brownbridge and Frans Rood show off some of their work at a kick-off event for the Pelham Art Festival at the Pelham Public Library on Tuesday April 21, 2015 in Welland, Ont.

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Peter Conradi, MANAGING EDITOR

Taxes don't always tax us

BRIAN BATY
For Postmedia Network

It is interesting to hear the various voices on matters of taxation.

There are some people who see taxes as evil, something to reduce or eliminate as less government is better government. There are others at the end of the spectrum who see taxes as apportioning our fair share for better communities and better lives.

No matter where you sit on the spectrum about taxes, everyone wants to see value for money and the elimination of waste and duplication.

Prior to entering regional government I saw taxes as simply a matter of paying my fair share for annual services and a reasonable contribution to pay off the accumulated debt and need for ongoing maintenance of our infrastructure. I also appreciated that a portion was going to serve those people less fortunate through public health and the three domains of community service: children, seniors and those financially challenged by lack of employment or disability.

In the past few years I have learned of a different approach to taxation; that is targeted investments in various sectors that offer the opportunity to leverage other funds to enhance our communities and the lives of its citizens. Some incentives even talk about the ROI, or return on investment, in multiples of eight to 10 factors. Others speak to the "in-kind" matching resources such as office space, computer or staff time to advance the projects.

One such project is the Niagara Prosperity Initiative which provides up to $1.5 million annually to address poverty in neighbourhoods throughout Niagara. Our NPI review team has just gone through more than 60 proposals that were submitted by not-for-profits, agencies, churches and community groups this year alone. Some involve community gardens, others are directed toward the enhancement of literacy or early years development. One provides support for women at risk or employment training and all are directed to be sustainable over time following early support by NPI. I was surprised to hear that even this program has developed a modest return on investment over time as well as significant in-kind contributions.

There are any other programs which are considered "investments" as opposed to one time taxation. For example, we have waived the development charges for industry and have seen immediate employment benefits. We have supported community improvement plans which have led to revitalizations of the cores of many communities with matching private investments and employment impacts. Recently we have commenced the Lakefront Enhancement Strategy and Waterfront Enhancement Strategy to seek out matching funds to maintain and improve water and lakefront amenities. New this year is the Cultural Investment Fund. This follows an inventory of culture in Niagara, the development of a culture plan, the commemoration of our being awarded the Culture Capital of Canada Award in 2012 and now an investment portfolio to enhance culture as an economic driver. The Gateway Economic Centre and Zone stimulus package has attracted a large food processing plant to Welland and provides hope for economic renewal along our canal and highway corridors.

It is hoped that these targeted investments will see a rebound of Niagara's economy and provide a place for youth to remain in our region.

Brian Baty is a Niagara Region councillor for Pelham. brian.baty@niagararegion.ca

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Fairmount is shown in the photo from the Ron Beaupre Collection.

Shipwrecks – Fairmount

SKIP GILLHAM
For Postmedia Network

Two ships have sailed the Great Lakes as *Fairmount*.

The first dated from 1903 and construction at the famous Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson shipyard at Wallsend, England.

The 78.33-metre-long steamer soon headed to the Great Lakes for inland service on behalf of Montreal Transportation Co. It got into trouble in the Welland Canal on Aug. 2, 1913, running into a stone abutment at Lock 23 of the third canal when an American freighter took out the lock gate allowing water to pour unchecked through the chamber.

Fairmount was sold for saltwater service on March 10, 1915, and left the Great Lakes. It stranded at Plana Keys, Acklin Island, Bahamas, on Aug. 23, 1915, and was a total loss. The ship had loaded a cargo of coal at Newport News, Va., for Cienfugos, Cuba, when it encountered a late summer Atlantic storm and had to be abandoned as a total loss.

■ WELLAND CANAL

Canal memorial project refocuses its priorities

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

The committee tasked with creating a memorial to the men who died building the Welland Canal has started a process of breaking down its ballooning budget.

St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik, who co-chairs the task force with St. Catharines MP Rick Dykstra, said Saturday the committee is breaking down the project into phases rather than attempting to budget something grand in one shot.

"The original purpose of the task force was to get the memorial built, and we're going to do that. That is Phase 1," Sendzik said, the day after the committee met to deal with a budget that has grown to more than $1 million from $450,000.

"After that, we can look at the parkette, to give people who visit it a place to reflect. That is Phase 2, and then following that we can start to look at Phase 3 which would be any enhancements."

Some committee members balked at the more than $1 million price tag for the memorial project, suggesting it was too expensive and too difficult to fundraise.

Sendzik said the parkette included in the selected design for the memorial which has not yet been publicly released, nearly doubled the cost of the project. This was due in part because of the cost of enhancements to the parkette, including lights and benches.

But those items were not really scrutinized by the committee, he said. Some may not be necessary, others could be fund-raised for and still others might have cheaper alternatives.

The committee's first task, he said, is to bring a budget to St. Catharines city council for the memorial itself as a first phase of the project, before moving to the other elements.

The memorial to the workers killed during the 1914 to 1932 construction period cannot be erected at the Lock 3 Museum site until renovations to the Lock 3 property are completed in 2017.

grant.lafleche@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @grantrants

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IN BRIEF

Free compost

Niagara Region is offering residents free compost until May 30.

Residents can pick up one cubic metre of compost for free, while quantities last, at the Bridge Street Landfill, 1300 Bridge St., Fort Erie, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and statutory holidays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The landfill is closed Sundays.

Compost is available to residents of Grimsby, Pelham, Lincoln and West Lincoln only at the Niagara Road 12 landfill, Concession Rd. 7 in West Lincoln. The landfill is closed Sundays and Mondays. It is open Tuesday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's also open Saturdays and statutory holidays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Residents are required to bring their own shovels and containers and load their own compost, ensuring that loads leaving the site are securely covered.

Residents are encouraged to donate non-perishable food items or cash in support of Fort Erie COPE (Community Outreach Program – Erie), Grimsby Benevolent Fund and West Lincoln Community Care in exchange for the compost.

For more information about Niagara Region's waste management services, call 905-356-4141 or 1-800-594-5542, or visit www.niagararegion.ca/waste.

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Planning Meeting for an Official Plan Amendment

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

What: Planning Meeting for an Official Plan Amendment in accordance with Section 17 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended.
When: **Monday, May 11, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.**
Where: Town of Pelham Municipal Offices - Council Chambers (20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill)
Owner: Town of Pelham
File No: OP-AM-01-2015 & OP-AM-02-2015

Information

What is this?

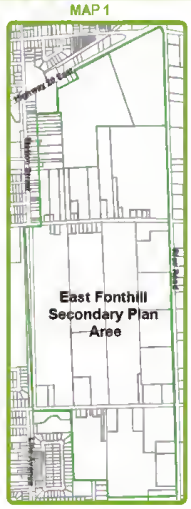
An application to amend the Official Plan was received for the lands comprising East Fonthill. (OP-AM-02-15) (Map 1)

The applicant (Town of Pelham) seeks approval to amend the Official Plan to include the East Fonthill Demonstration Plans and Urban Design Guidelines as policy within the Official Plan.

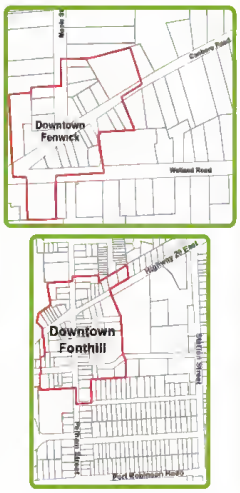
Also, an application to amend the Official Plan was received for the lands comprising the Downtowns of Fenwick and Fonthill. (OP-AM-01-15) (Map 2)

The applicant (Town of Pelham) seeks approval to amend the Official Plan to include the Downtown Master Plan of Fenwick and Fonthill (2014) as a policy within the Official Plan.

MAP 1



MAP 2



HAVE YOUR SAY

Your input is encouraged! We are listening!

Please provide input by speaking at the public meeting or by making a written submission to the Town of Pelham. To provide input in writing, or to request personal notice if the proposed amendment is adopted, please send a letter c/o Town Clerk, Nancy J. Bozzato, PO Box 400, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill, Ontario, L0S 1E0.

Unless indicated otherwise, personal information and all comments will become part of the public record and may be publicly released.

pelham.ca

Need More Information? Contact us!

For more information, please contact Ms. Jodi Legros, Community Planning & Development Administrative Assistant, at 905-892-2607, ext. 321 or email at jlegros@pelham.ca. A copy of the Information Report regarding the proposed amendment, as well as any additional information regarding the application, may be obtained on the Town's website at pelham.ca/planning-meetings-notices or at the Community Planning and Development Department (2nd Floor) after 12:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8, 2015.

Legal Notice

Important Information

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make a written submission to the Town of Pelham before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Pelham to the Ontario Municipal Board. If a person or public body does not make oral submission at a public meeting or make written submission to the Town of Pelham before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board, unless in the opinion of the Board, there is reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party. If you wish to be notified of the adoption of the proposed Official Plan Amendment, you must make a written request to the Clerk of the Town of Pelham and such request must include the name and address to which such notice should be sent.

Dated at the Town of Pelham, this 31st day of March, 2015. Nancy J. Bozzato, Town Clerk

Town of Pelham Community Planning & Development Department

Region day-care worker accused of assault

A 49-year-old early childhood educator for a Niagara Region day-care centre was arrested Thursday on a charge of assaulting a child.

Niagara Regional Police said the child abuse unit began an investigation Monday into the alleged assault of a child in regional day care.

Niagara Region's commissioner of community services Katherine Chislett said the employee is on paid leave until the matter is resolved.

"Absolutely, our 100% top priority is the safety and care of the children who've been entrusted to us by their parents. We take that incredibly seriously," Chislett said.

"And that's why as soon as this came to our attention, we got the police in to get the right investigation and we had the employee leave the workplace at that time."

Chislett said everyone involved is co-operating fully with the authorities, which include the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators and the police.

She said she wasn't aware of any other case like this at a Niagara Region day-care before.

Police said the unit charged Julia Muscato with one count of assault.

Police are asking anyone with information on the matter to contact the child abuse unit at 905-735-7811, ext. 5100.

12 dead kittens found roadside

The discovery of a dozen dead kittens found on the side of the road in Beamsville in early April is under investigation.

Lincoln County Humane Society said a post-mortem examination was recently completed on the kittens, who were found on South Service Rd. near the Town of Lincoln offices on April 8.

Executive director Kevin Strooband said the cats ranged in age from six to eight weeks old. They were from at least two litters and as many as four.

The causes of death aren't being revealed by the humane society, but the case is being investigated as a possible act of cruelty to animals. "It's part of the investigation," Strooband said.

Humane society officials are appealing to the public for information about the person or persons who were recently caring for at least two litters of kittens.

Brock, college unite on video-game program

Brock University and Niagara College are partnering on a video-game program.

As part of the 2015 Brock-Niagara Summit, senior administrators from Niagara's two post-secondary institutions Monday signed an articulation agreement for the new GAME program.

The unique partnership will allow students to earn a bachelor's degree in game design or programming, along with an advanced diploma in game development all in four years. Students will take classes at both Brock and Niagara, and will have access to computer labs at both schools.

New board members for NSI

Niagara Sustainability Initiative, a non-profit organization focused on improving environmental and economic performance in the region, has some new faces on its board of directors.

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Wednesday, May 13	7:30 – 8:30 pm
Thursday, May 14	10:00-11:00 am

Walking Club - Everyone is welcome! – May 12 & May 14
Interested in joining a Walking Club? Then join ours! Tuesdays at Pelham Arena from 9–10am &Thursdays at Fonthill Bandshell from 9–10:30am. For more info, contact (905) 892-2607 ext. 329.

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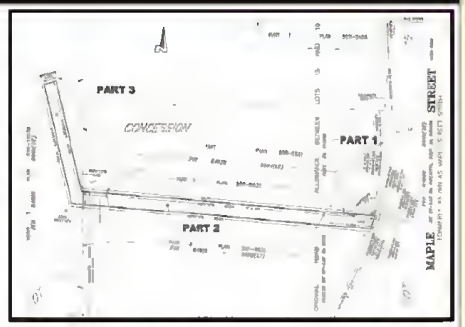
Form 2
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR APPROVALTO EXPROPRIATE LAND
Expropriations Act

IN THE MATTER OF an application by The Corporation of the Town of Pelham, for approval to expropriate land for the purpose of an easement for the construction, maintenance, repair and operation of a storm water outlet for the storm water management pond serving the Cherry Ridge Subdivision in the Town of Pelham, and works ancillary thereto;

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that application has been made for approval to expropriate land, as described as follows:

AN EASEMENT in perpetuity commencing on the date of registration of the plan of expropriation in, on, over, under and through the lands described as Part of Lots 15 and 16, Concession 9 Pelham and Part of the Road Allowance between Lots 15 and 16, Concession 9 Pelham, in the Town of Pelham and the Regional Municipality of Niagara, being more particularly identified as Parts 2 and 3 on Reference Plan 59R-12563, registered in the Land Titles Office for the Land Titles Division of Niagara South, for the purpose of entering upon and occupying the land with all necessary vehicles, machinery, equipment and material required to facilitate the construction, maintenance, repair and operation of a storm sewer outlet for the storm water management pond serving the Cherry Ridge Subdivision in the Town of Pelham, and works ancillary thereto.



Any owner of lands in respect of which notice is given who desires an inquiry into whether the taking of such land is fair, sound and reasonably necessary in the achievement of the objectives of the expropriating authority shall so notify the approving authority in writing:

(a) in the case of a registered owner, served personally or by registered mail within thirty days after the registered owner is served with the notice, or when the registered owner is served by publication, within thirty days after the first publication of the notice,

(b) in the case of an owner who is not a registered owner, within thirty days after the first publication of the notice

The approving authority is The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Pelham:
c/o Nancy J. Bozzato, Town Clerk, 20 PELHAM TOWN SQUARE, P.O. BOX 400, FONTHILL, ON L0S 1E0.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF PELHAM Per: Nancy J. Bozzato, Town Clerk

This notice first published on the 22nd day of April, 2015.

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Deputy Treasurer

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MEETING POSTPONED

Please be advised the Public Meeting under the Planning Act regarding the Official Plan Amendment (OP-AM-01-2015 & OP-AM-02-2015) scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2015 has been postponed. Visit pelham.ca for details.

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Thursday, June 11, 2015 @ 2:00 pm

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Thursday, May 14 – starts at 6:00 pm

Meet at the Farmers' Market, 20 Pelham Town Square.
Bring the entire family and chat with the Mayor about what matters to you.
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Sponsored by the Pelham Active Transportation Committee – Look for our display at the Market!

LOCALNEWS

■ **EDUCATION:** $2,500 scholarships being awarded at every high school in the region

Brock aims to keep brightest students in Niagara

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

When high school student Anna Annibale learned her mom had received a phone call from her principal, she was nervous.

What ensued nearly brought her to tears.

She was awarded a $2,500 scholarship to Brock University — one of 55 the institution is handing out to Niagara high school students this year and which are aimed at putting a cork in the region's brain drain.

"I'm so overwhelmed, and I'm so thankful," the Lakeshore Catholic High School senior said following her surprise visit recently from university officials and the Brock mascot Boomer.

Anthony Infurna, who lives just doors away from Annibale in Fort Erie, is a fellow Gator who was also surprised with a scholarship, making his transition to becoming a Badger all the more easier.

"I knew if I didn't get this, I'd have to work real hard this summer and make a substantial amount of money to pay for tuition."

Both students at the Port Colborne high school plan to reside on the St. Catharines campus to get the complete university experience.

Infurna will take Brock's concurrent education program this fall toward becoming a high school English teacher; Annibale will be studying tourism management in hopes of doing a co-op education placement at Disney World, where she'd like to continue with a career.

Scholarships were also presented last Tuesday to Thorold Secondary School students Sasha Vince, who is enrolling in the biochemistry co-op program, and to Isabel Skeffington, who will be studying biological sciences.

In total, Brock University is awarding 55 scholarships, each worth $2,500 — a university-funded investment totalling $137,500 — through its new Principal's Scholarships program, for which recipients are chosen by the administrative head at every Niagara high school, based on academic and volunteer performance.

"We've heard so many concerns that we're not keeping our best and brightest here — but we're not starting early enough," said university president Jack Lightstone.

The scholarships, he said, are offered as an incentive for these students to continue their education in Niagara, while Brock continues to nurture its relationship with the community.

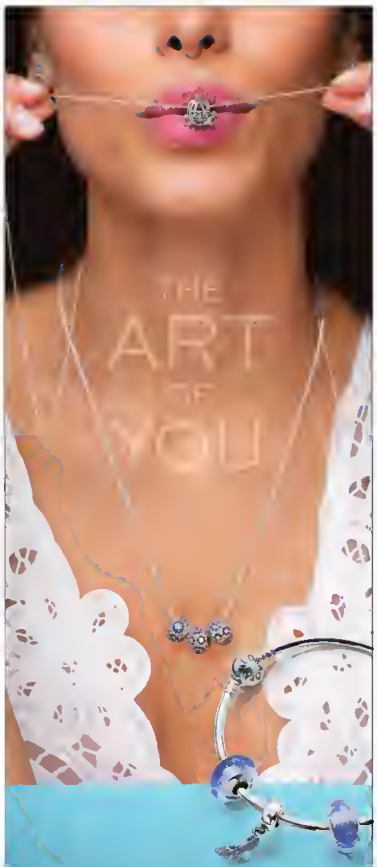
"We hope these people will stay and be the next generation of leaders in Niagara."

A complete list of Principal's Scholarship recipients will be released by Brock at a later date, after winners have confirmed their post-secondary intentions.

greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @GregAtTheTrib

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Mascots for both Brock University and Thorold Secondary School are on hand as Brock presented its Niagara Principal's Scholarships to two students. Pictured between the mascots from left are: Brock president Jack Lightstone, recipients Sasha Vince and Isabel Skeffington, principal Helena Tritchew and Rico Natale, Brock's director of student awards and financial aid.



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LOCALNEWS

BUSINESS: Andrew and Jennifer Julie have traded corporate life in Toronto for a slice of Niagara living

New Brock golf course owner getting it back on par

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

Andrew Julie is looking to put a Merrittville Hwy. golf course back on par with its former glory days.

"This year the big journey is about repairing things and hoping to get people to come back," says the new owner of Brock Golf Course, most formerly known as The Greens at Brock.

The 37-year-old won't publicly disclose what he paid for the 26-hectare property, but figures it would have been out of his price range had it been in tip-top shape.

He needs to tend to mountains of soil and gravel dumped along the crumbling entrance to the clubhouse and finish numerous projects that seem to have been started over the years but never finished.

The smell of fresh now paint wafts from the restaurant that has been closed for nine years, but which Julie hopes to have open within a couple of weeks.

Since gaining possession in February, he's been taking care of a leaky roof, upgrading electrical services and looking after other maintenance matters.

"Certainly, we can't fix everything right away, but I think we have an attitude better than the previous owner," he says.

"People coming in seem to be excited about the changes."

Julie will be bringing in merchandise, plans to upgrade rental clubs — basically bring it back to the days he remembers when he was younger and used to come out to drive a bucket of balls.

For Julie and his wife Jennifer, also 37, the golf course is a new beginning with their young family — daughters Stacey, 5, and Clara, 3.

The 18 holes came with an eight-year-old home on-site and as a result a considerably shorter commute to work.

In fact, it was a need to escape the Toronto rat race that led Julie back to his Niagara roots.

He worked for RBC in Hogtown for nine years, including on national commercial credit and risk management accounts. His wife was in marketing for Lahatt. Travel time and long hours away from the girls were taking a toll.

"We said we can't do this for 30 years."

Most recently living in the 'burbs of Mississauga, the couple who met while studying at Northeastern University in Boston — Julie an E.L. Crossley grad there on a rowing scholarship — decided to seize the opportunity when it was learned the old golf course was on the market.

A door to greener pastures, if you will.

GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Andrew Julie, with wife Jennifer, is the new owner of Brock Golf Course. Although not a great golfer himself, his parents have owned Sawmill Golf Course in Pelham since its establishment in 1976, and he'll be parlaying some of his knowledge gleaned there into rejuvenating his course on Merrittville Hwy. in Thorold.

And for Julie, it harkened not only a return to home, but a return to a way of life.

He's the son of parents who in 1976 established and today continue to operate Sawmill Golf Course in Pelham.

He's covered most aspects of running of golf course through the family business, working on the grounds crew, operating a pro shop and hooking tournaments.

He worked there a few years after he returned home to complete his MBA at Brock University's Goodman School of Business.

Dad comes over a few times a week to his to lend his expertise and check in on his son's investment. They share their knowledge of the greens and fairways.

In terms of operating the club, it should be an ace-in-the hole for Julie.

Getting around to enjoy his lush lawns, well, that's a whole other story for him and his wife.

"Both of us are not that good at golf," Julie says.

And that for him fits in with his long-held fondness for the Brock course.

"This is the kind of place where if you're a lousy golfer or not that good, it's a good place to come," he says.

"It's not for traditional golf, it's for entertainment."

There's no strict golf course rules on attire. No pretention. And no lofty rates.

The Julies opened the driving range three weeks ago, charging $10 for a bucket of driving range balls. Spring fees are $18 for 18 holes or $15 for 9 — the same price for a full round after 5 p.m.

A custom club maker remains as a tenant in the clubhouse basement. Three grounds crew workers remain from previous years, as does a pro shop veteran. Julie has reached out to his alma mater to hire a couple Brock students, including to teach junior players.

For Julie, his golf course purchase is not about flipping a property in need of TLC. It's an investment in family. For family.

"We're excited about this as a long-term thing," he says.

"I hope in 30 years our kids are running this course."

greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @GregAtTheTrib

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Niagara Falls - Evening/Wknd Westlane Secondary School 5960 Pitton Rd - Room 1091	Tuesday, May 19 8:00 p.m.

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■ TEACHING POSITIONS

Layoffs not inevitable despite Catholic board report

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

Niagara Catholic District School Board has declared 60 elementary teaching jobs redundant heading into the next school year, as of April 1.

But those numbers are based on old enrolment projections and won't necessarily lead to layoffs.

Education director John Crocco said the 60 figure was based on forecasts at the start of this month. However, enrolment numbers since then have been ramping up.

Crocco said it's possible there will ultimately be no redundancies by next September.

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association Niagara elementary unit president Marie Balanowski said in an e-mail that board senior staff are "looking at reducing or cutting programs such as English as a second language and Reading Recovery.

"However, the budget is not finalized yet and we are hoping that senior administration will reconsider.

"Senior administration is looking to reduce or eliminate some programs, but we value the services that we provide to students and feel that senior administration can find other ways to achieve savings. We believe (they) declared too many elementary teachers redundant and (we) are hoping that many of these teachers will be recalled."

A redundancy is a position that is no longer needed, but it doesn't necessarily result in a permanent layoff for a teacher. The board could add new teaching positions elsewhere, and every year some teachers create vacancies by retiring or leaving the board.

Crocco said as his board works toward a "balanced and sustainable annual budget," programs and services need to be flexible to allow different ways to deliver them.

"We are focused on aligning the ministry funding with expenditures, and that's an expectation of the ministry, to submit a balanced budget," he said.

"Our ESL, literacy and numeracy programs will continue to be provided to students next year."

Meanwhile, Crocco noted, two-thirds of the funding boards receive from the province is directly related to student enrolment.

"We continue to be in a period of declining enrolment and have about 500 less students since last year," he said. "And that's also reflective of the changing demographics in Niagara."

In addition to meeting class-size thresholds required by the ministry, according to Niagara Catholic's collective agreement with its teachers it had to declare elementary redundancies by April 1.

"Since (then) enrolment continues to increase ... by approximately 90 to 100 students," Crocco said.

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EDUCATION: Municipalities to get formal role in planning

DSBN to get new process for school closures

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

A new policy on school closure reviews is on deck for District School Board of Niagara.

Staff recently told trustees the province feels the current process is too contentious, inflexible and long.

Municipal representatives get no formal role and trustees don't always vote in recommendations from the accommodation review committees, known as ARCs, staff said.

A new set of guidelines was recently released that are effective immediately.

All Ontario school boards must revise their own ARC rules before any further school closings or amalgamation reviews.

Since 2007, Niagara's public board has closed 21 elementary schools and built three news ones.

Three more are under construction — Twenty Valley, Harriet Tubman and a new Ridgeway facility.

Four high schools have also been shut, while a new Fort Erie secondary school will open in 2017.

All trustee-approved closures followed public and senior staff accommodation review committees that were based on the Education Ministry's pupil accommodation review guidelines last updated in 2009.

The revised guidelines, to be firmed up locally with public input, include more emphasis on student achievement and less on the impact of a shut-down on the general community.

It also demands extra pre-planning by the board before a review starts, and formal involvement by the municipality.

The rules for reviews also mean a shorter ARC timeline, to three months from six, and a minimum of two public input meetings.

"The change, to me, that's crucial is we will get a packet (of ARC information each time given) to all trustees," said trustee Dave Schaubel, chair of DSBN's program and planning committee.

He said in the past, only one or two trustees connected to each review would have that comprehensive document package.

"We'll all have (that), well in advance, so we can be well informed when people are talking to us."

On May 5, a DSBN draft policy on the accommodation review process was to be released.

From May 6 to June 3, that policy will be posted on the DSBN website dsbn.org for community comment.

No public meetings on a new policy have yet been scheduled, but the board says it's an option if more consultation is needed.

People will also be able to mail comments to 191 Carlton St., St. Catharines, L2R 7P4, attention superintendent Lora Courtois.

A new policy will be voted on at a June 22 board meeting.

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■ HUMANE SOCIETY

Pet clinic a success

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

In its first year of operations, Welland and District Regional Spay Neuter Clinic has seen some pawsitive results.

The low-cost, high-volume clinic, operated by Welland and District Humane Society with help from a PetSmart Charities of Canada grant, has seen procedures performed on more than 4,000 animals since opening its doors last year.

The clinic, at 700 East Main St., began offering its services first to rescue and shelter animals, before expanding its outreach in September to pets belonging to members of the public.

The facility has since seen 640 dogs and 1,953 cats, as well as 1,375 shelter animals spayed or neutered.

What began as a vision has been brought to fruition and with "great success," shelter animal care manager Tammy Gaboury said.

The clinic is open five days during the week, but staff will soon begin offering appointments one or two Saturdays a month to increase convenience for pet owners.

As a high-volume clinic, specializing only in spay and neuter procedures, staff are able to perform 25 to 30 surgeries a day.

"We plan on keeping the numbers up as high as possible, while also maintaining quality," humane society executive director John Greer said.

"This is a service the community is in desperate need of."

Greer stressed that while the clinic is busy, there is no waiting list to book an appointment.

To ensure quality remains high, a survey is sent out each day to pet owners who've interacted with the clinic.

"We've gotten a lot of great response," Gaboury said.

"People have really shown their appreciation for having a low-cost clinic."

A website is expected to be launched for the facility in the near future that will allow pet owners to pay for procedures and have their questions answered online.

Through the clinic, the humane society was able to spay and neuter 119 community cats, most feral, in April alone.

"We're stopping that over-population from happening," Gaboury said, adding the timing is perfect as spring is when many felines enter their heat cycle.

Since February, staff have also been operating a mobile community outreach unit that allows animals to be picked up for surgery, brought to the clinic and returned to their owners in areas where transportation is limited.

Community events are being planned, Gaboury said, that will allow people who don't have access to transportation to bring their animals to a centralized location for pick up.

The humane society is also reaching out to the public with its mobile spay and neuter clinic, the first of its kind in Ontario.

The clinic-on-wheels was used for the first time April 18 and 19 during a special initiative that saw procedures performed on 37 animals in the Six Nations of the Grand River community.

Veterinarians, vet techs and other volunteers donated their time at the event, which reached out to pet owners who would not otherwise have access to treatment for their animals.

"This allows us to attack pet overpopulation on different fronts, not just one," Greer said.

Other remote communities have since been contacting the Welland humane society in hopes of accessing the mobile unit.

In the next few weeks, the humane society will be launching its Got a Pet? Get a Vet campaign, which encourages people who visit the clinic to have their pet spayed or neutered to continue working with local vets to ensure their pets remain in good health.

maryanne.firth@sunmedia.ca
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LOCALNEWS

Taking shape

MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The new headquarters for the Niagara Regional Police is taking shape. The $65-million project at Valley Way and Portage Rd. in Niagara Falls started in late 2013. The 210,000-square-foot facility, being built over eight acres, will serve as the NRP headquarters, which is currently in St. Catharines. The project is expected to be completed late this year or early in 2016. The Niagara Falls district office on Morrison St. will close when the new headquarters opens. For the first time, several policing departments will be under one roof, housing approximately 680 police service and civilian staff on Monday, April 27, 2015 in Niagara Falls.

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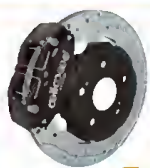

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■ HEALTH CARE

GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Laura Morrison, left, clinical manger of kidney care services at Welland hospital, discusses some of the patient equipment furnished through the hospital auxiliary's $1-million donation, with auxiliary president Jeanie Bourque and hospital foundation donor relations director Ang Climenhage and community outreach director Mary Sergenese on Monday April 27, 2015 in Welland, Ont.

Thanks a million, hospital auxiliary

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

You have to sell a lot of teddy bears, magazines, cards and pick-me-ups to raise a million dollars.

But that's exactly what a group of mostly senior women and men with the Welland hospital's auxiliary unit did over the past decade from the gift shop there — making good on a seven-figure promise to support kidney patient services at the Third St. institution.

Auxiliary president Jeanie Bourque recalled that back in 2005, the hospital foundation said it would give naming rights for the new dialysis centre to whomever raised $1 million toward its construction and equipment purchases.

"I said, 'Hmm, that sounds good,'" Bourque recalled last Monday, adding auxiliary members were "a little leery" at first.

"When you say a million dollars, you panic, because that's a lot of money."

But she was confident revenues from the auxiliary-run gift shop, supported by rent paid on its coffee kiosk and revenue from Nevada ticket sales from the East Main St. Avondale store, could support the lofty goal.

After all, she noted, the auxiliary had then just fulfilled a $750,000 fundraising goal for intensive care unit renovations.

Bourque made a pitch to the auxiliary board on the kidney services campaign, and it accepted the challenge.

When the final $100,000 cheque from the auxiliary's 10-year commitment was turned over March 27, Bourque got a standing ovation for her longstanding commitment to the group which this year marks its 70th anniversary.

The auxiliary today is about 55 members strong, with about 40 of them most active.

"They've been an integral part of our fundraising activities, and we're grateful for that," said Ang Climenhage, Niagara Health System's OneFoundation director of donor relations.

Even through its campaign, she noted, the auxiliary committed to other hospital causes including working to provide $10,000 toward its mammography unit.

When the auxiliary set out to make good on its million-dollar pledge in 2005, Welland hospital was just about to open a temporary 17-station dialysis centre.

The permanent centre, 1,125 squares metres in size and built at a cost of $7.5 million, opened in 2008. It has 24 stations that serve 125 of the 400 people in Niagara receiving dialysis treatment, said clinical manager Laura Morrison.

"This partnership (with the auxiliary) has been amazing for us," she said.

Welland's dialysis centre became the first project completed under the It's Our Time campaign, which had a $40-million goal to improve all NHS sites and construct the west St. Catharines hospital.

Prior to the Welland Hospital Auxiliary Dialysis Centre opening, Welland-area patients were required to get their life-sustaining treatment in St. Catharines.

People with end-stage renal disease require the procedure through which blood is cycled through a machine that filters out toxins and minerals. Patients usually sit for four hours at a time, three days a week while their blood is cleaned.

Auxiliary volunteers are "so happy and proud" to have played a role in bringing that type of care to south Niagara, said Bourque, who at this point is unclear as to what her group's next goal will be.

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DON FRASER / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Deb Matthews, Ontario deputy premier and treasury board president, at the GO Open Data Conference at Brock University.

Ontario announces open-data expansion, public input

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

Ontario is setting an open-data first for Canada.

Provincial treasury board president Deb Matthews said a draft "open data directive" has been posted for public feedback.

It's part of a comprehensive plan to release government data and let the public comment on a directive that touches on areas like gridlock, health care, energy use and school enrolment.

Ontario is also the first province in Canada to provide such a draft directive for public comment, Matthews said at the recent Go Open Data 2015 conference at Brock University.

"In the spirit of open government, we want to know what you think," said Matthews, who is leading Ontario's open government efforts and is also Ontario's deputy premier.

"Open data does bring about a better democracy," she said. "We get better policy, programs and services and most importantly, better outcomes for people.

"There's an old adage, that knowledge is power, but knowledge comes from data," she said. "So data is power and access to data is essential to building that knowledge base."

That directive instructs Ontario's ministries and provincial agencies to make data public, unless exempted for privacy, legal, security or commercially sensitive reasons.

Public feedback will help shape the final directive to be submitted for government approval in the fall and then posted on Ontario.ca.

"It means strengthening accountability and transparency, so that Ontarians have access to their information that they want and need about their government," Matthews said to more than 200 conferencegoers from the private, public, education and non-profit sectors.

"And it improves access to government data to help businesses grow, spur innovation and (create) solutions to the problems we face, from gridlock to homelessness."

Public uses for this data could include building maps, apps and data-based models to help with social and business policy.

Just over 400 open and downloadable data sets are now available — 188 of them recently released — through the provincial open data catalogue at ontario.ca/opendata.

"Already our data sets have been downloaded more than 150,000 times," Matthews said, adding the No. 1 set requested is public-sector salary disclosure.

"It's No. 1 in your hearts, so you can go online right now to see what I make," she said to laughter.

"I am a huge believer in releasing data," she said. "It's not always easy, and it's not easy for governments because having that data open means it's out there, warts and all.

"But it makes us better and stronger."

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■ KNOWLEDGE

Conference: Open data an information game changer

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

Open data will pave the way to more informed decisions, and a better society.

Variations on that theme dominated the third-annual GO Open Data Conference held at Brock University.

Among its keynote speakers was Christian Villum, a Denmark-based international community manager for the non-profit Open Knowledge.

"How do we get people involved in open data?" Villum said to the group of about 200. "We're seeing all this new data becoming open and that's amazing — but what can we really do with it?"

The gathering included speakers, panels, knowledge sessions and learning labs.

St. Catharines' community-driven conference is designed by, and for Ontario's open data community and stakeholders.

Waterloo was the site of the first gathering in 2013, and Toronto the second.

At the event in St. Catharines, Villum spoke about "advocacy, training and building technology to promote the idea of open knowledge."

The fact this movement has become a global network of collaboration is critical, he said.

"We're tapping into a whole ideology of building universal access to information ... this global network, basically a network of communities, stretches across more than 60 countries."

Villum showed the conference-goers powerful uses of sharing publicly-released and downloadable data by government bodies and other groups.

One example was an "atlas of pollution" displaying the planet in national carbon dioxide emissions.

Another united world researchers who opened-sourced data about the H1N1 swine flu virus and its genome, resulting in the rapid production of a vaccine.

"Open data is about people ... who want to have an input in how society is run," Villum continued. "They can use (the information) to create a change for people.

"And people can learn about these things without being technical ... we need to empower them."

Villum said participants at the event were on the cusp of a historic information revolution.

"We are the frontrunners of this idea, these principles, and have the responsibility and privilege of helping shape the future."

In an interview, co-host Connie McCutcheon said the conference is also about "taking awareness to action."

"We're hoping people won't just know about open data, they will learn to use it," said McCutcheon, a senior business analyst for Niagara Region.

That accumulating public information online "should affect every citizen," she added.

"This is about the ability of any person to get a hold of data, and become more engaged with governments and non-profits."

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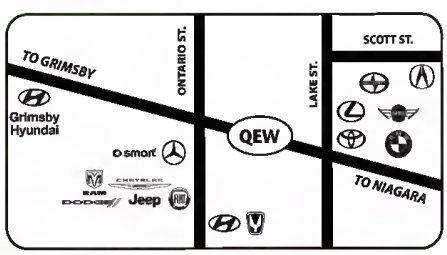

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■ **TRANSPORTATION:** An introduction to RideCo

App could be of use to regional transit system

ROB HOULE
Postmedia Network

There's an app for that.

Niagara Region's transportation strategy steering committee heard recently that there's an app to consider as the region works toward its goal of a fully integrated municipal transit system.

Co-founder Matthew Monteyne introduced committee members to RideCo, a computer and mobile application that allows users to book shared private-enterprise transportation, such as a taxi service.

"It effectively allows consumers to book personalized transit that's flexible and cost-effective," Monteyne told committee members.

"What we do is, we take ... users who are booking these trips, and we aggregate them," Monteyne said. "We have a cloud-based logistics solution that's constantly taking all these different people where they want to go and generating highly efficient itineraries for transportation partners to execute on."

RideCo partners with taxi, limousine, shuttle companies or bus companies to provide the service.

Users book a pickup time online via a computer or their mobile device far in advance or in as little as 15 minutes ahead of time. They can either choose to be picked up at home or at a "hub," such as a mall or hospital. If they choose the hub, the trip costs less, since a hub is more likely to have more than one rider. Others are picked up and dropped off along the way.

The Town of Milton and Metrolinx began a one-year pilot project, at a cost of $125,000 each, using the app to book rides to and from Milton's GO train station. The idea being it will encourage train riders to leave their cars at home, easing pressure on an overflowing parking lot, and fill the route gaps of the town's transit system. Just as public transit, the system will be subsidized by the municipality, with Monteyne telling the committee the Milton pilot is based on a 60% cost recovery. A *Toronto Star* article said RideCo users in Milton will not pay more than $1.95 for a ride to the GO station.

The app could prove to be an asset to Niagara Region as it works towards a permanent transit system that would service all 12 of Niagara's municipalities.

"It's very efficient in low-density areas, because we can use small vehicles," Monteyne said. "Three passengers fills a car, so you can go into these little regions that would otherwise not be well served by a bus line and you could actually service those regions."

Those private shuttles could take riders in Wainfleet, for example, to a hub in Port Colborne to hook up with a future regional bus service, or riders from West Lincoln to a hub in Lincoln or Grimsby.

"This sounds like a really practical solution to our concern about running a regional transit line on three hubs and how you serve the rest," St. Catharines regional Coun. Bruce Timms said.

The region has committed to work with the municipalities to create a permanent municipal transit system by fall.

The minutes of the transportation committee will be forwarded to regional council where councillors will have opportunity to discuss Monteyne's presentation.

Steering committee chair Tony Quirk, regional councillor for Grimsby, advised the committee, which comprises regional and municipal politicians and a representative from each of Brock University and Niagara College, that Monteyne will return in the next few months to give an update on the pilot project in Milton.

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New judge seated on the bench

FRANKI IKEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Paul R. Sweeny is welcomed by Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Justice Heather Forster Smith as the newest judge at the Welland courthouse last Monday in Welland. Sweeny was appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

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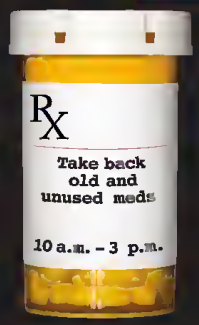
Saturday, May 9, 2015



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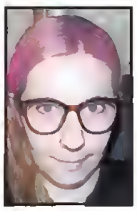
■ PUBLISHING

Book profiles Niagara's music scene

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

Amanda Tulk wanted to support Niagara's music scene, but as a recovering alcoholic, going to bars to see bands perform was a no-no.

Instead, she decided to share their stories. One by one, until she had a complete book.


AMANDA TULK

In just a few months, *Sofa City Sounds* ($20) was rolling off the press. The 60-page collection of profiles probes the life and music of local performers like The KaC Himself, The Mandevilles, Rod Standish and 22 others.

"I had spoken to Kris Collver (The KaC Himself) about it, and he was interested,' says Tulk. "Kris put up a Facebook post for me that I was writing a book, and that I needed some local musicians to be a part of it. My inbox on Facebook just exploded."

A huge fan of the local music scene, Tulk knows the hurdles Niagara artists face. Foremost being awareness.

"If you don't know your local music, what's the point of knowing the bigger music," she says. "At one time, the bigger music was the local music."

Every band Tulk approached co-operated. The only problem was time — one band she profiled broke up while the book was being written.

If there's a link connecting all the stories, it's the "struggle" to succeed in a music scene that can seem pretty bleak.

"The bigger thing they had in common was the passion to do what they do," she says. "Everybody I worked with ... was very, very receptive. More than happy to help me out and give me any information I needed.

"It gave a different kind of liveliness to the musicians aside from being on the stage."

The book was unveiled at a book launch at Taps Brewhouse and Grill in Niagara Falls Saturday. Several local artists will performed.

Taps co-owner Eric Martin funded the project. It was published by Niagara Falls company Grey Borders Books.

With Niagara accounted for, Tulk wants to do similar books for regions across the country.

"I want to take this right across Canada," she says. "Doing it the way we do it, this is going to help out a lot of underground and independent musicians."

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Hundreds walk for friends with multiple sclerosis

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

Welland resident Amelia Powell's thoughts were with a few close friends as she walked along the banks of her city's recreational canal Sunday.

She was one of 110 people participating in the Mandarin MS Walk in Welland, while about 150 took part in a walk in Niagara Falls and another 250 joined in a walk organized in St. Catharines. There were 57 events organized across Ontario this year, and more than 160 across Canada.

While Powell was at the event with a team led by her friend Lorissa Strychowskyj, she said has two more friends who are living with multiple sclerosis, Andrea Epp and Roseanne Brooks.

She said "it's hard to believe" that in her circle of friends, three people have been diagnosed with the neurological disorder.

It's an indication of the prevalence of MS in Canada, where more than 100,000 people are living with disease — the highest rate in the world.

She said the progression of MS is at different stages among her friends. While Strychowskyj was able to lead a team of friends called the Rizzy Zombie Crew, she said another friend is using a mobility scooter to get around while another doesn't have the strength she once did.

"They're still functioning and trying to make it in society," she said.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Affects the central nervous system, interfering with the brain's signals to the body.

An unpredictable disease than causes different symptoms in people, such as numbness, vision problems, impaired balance, fatigue and paralysis.

Research has led to treatments that can reduce the progression of the disease in some cases.

She felt compelled to join the walk Sunday in the hope of helping her friends and others who have been diagnosed with MS.

Pelham resident Karen Goldhawk participated in her first MS Walk in 2000, the same year she was diagnosed with the illness.

But even before she was diagnosed, she said, she always wanted to take part in the annual event, held this year along a path from Notre Dame high school to Merritt Island and back.

Despite living with MS, Goldhawk said she has been lucky.

"I've been really good," she said. "I haven't had many symptoms even since starting the medication in 2000."

But her own health can be attributed to the money raised through events like the MS Walk, which provides funding for research as well as support for Niagara families living with the disease.

"But I want to see a cure. I want to see an end," said Goldhawk, a homecare nurse who looks after several clients in advanced stages of MS.

Although the weather was perfect for the outdoor event, organizer Dave Wintle said there were fewer participants than in past years, likely due to competition from other events.

"There are so many walks around this weekend," he said. "People just can't spread themselves out."

In past years, there have been so many participants he needed 100 volunteers to keep the event running smoothly.

This year, he only needed 20 hard-working people to help.

Nevertheless, Wintle was satisfied with the event.

"I think it turned out really well," he said. "It's going to be a great day."

Robyn Garner, the local MS Society's manager of client services, shared his enthusiasm.

Last year, Niagara's three MS Walks brought in about $160,000, and she was hoping to raise about the same this year.

"Nobody's the same," she said. "You see it from one spectrum to the other. There are people that live with very limited progression and others that may progress quickly."

allan.benner@sunmedia.ca

ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

About 110 people joined in the MS Walk in Welland, joined by hundreds of others in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls on Sunday.

Niagara Peninsula Energy wants Hydro One assets

Postmedia Network

Niagara Peninsula Energy Inc. is hoping to save Pelham residents at least $450 a year — if it can purchase the assets of Hydro One in the community.

Buoyed by the recent announcement of a merger between Hydro One in Brampton and a group of area distribution companies, shareholders of the utility that serves Pelham is hoping for the same opportunity.

"Allowing NPEI to acquire Hydro One distribution assets adjacent to NPEI's geographic services territory will save each resident of Pelham at least $450 per year and more importantly to improve their service," Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn said in a media release. "

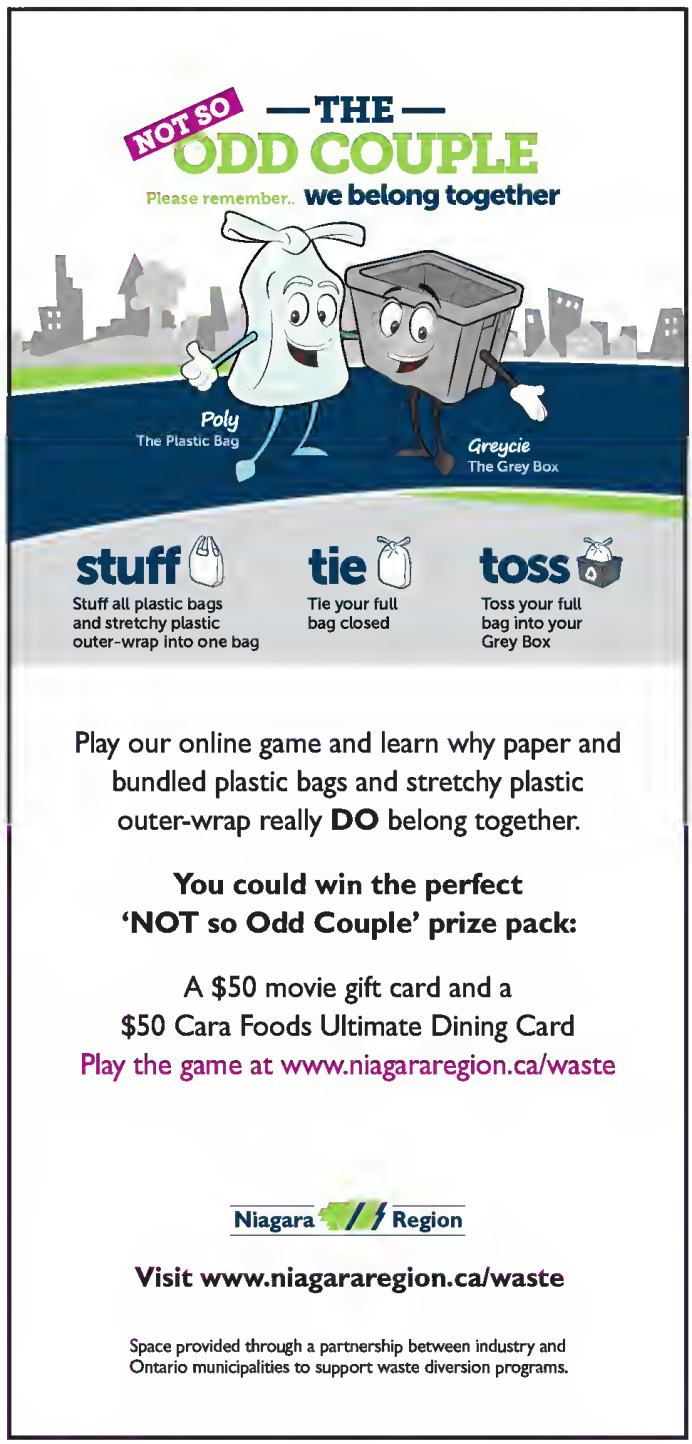
"Pelham residents deserve this.

"We will be seeking clarity from government to ensure that our local distribution company will have the same latitude to acquire provincial distribution assets at fair value from the new and soon-to-be partially privatized Hydro One."

Meanwhile, NPEI board chair Janie Palmer is concerned that the initial deal could become a barrier to other local utilities.

"We can't afford to simply entrench the current provincial distribution structure. We should have the opportunity for further transfer of customers from Hydro One to our local utility ownership," Palmer said.

"These savings and efficiency-improvement opportunities would occur for all of our customers."



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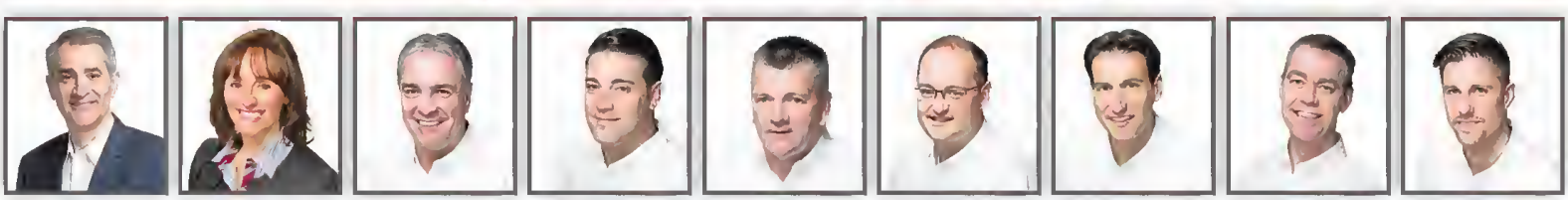

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■ **ENTERTAINMENT:** Hall of Famers to play casino Aug. 20

ZZ Top coming to Falls

Postmedia Network

Rock and Roll Hall of Famers ZZ Top take the stage at Niagara Fallsview Casino fResort or the first time ever this August.

For one night only they will perform their repertoire of hits such as *Tush*, *Legs*, *La Grange*, *Gimme All Your Lovin'* and *Sharp Dressed Man*.

Also this August, more than 40 international daredevil stuntmen, trapeze artists and contemporary dancers will soar over the audience and leap on stage to perform feats of strength and agility with Le Grand Cirque — Adrenaline.

Singer-songwriter Andy Kim, who has sold more than 30 million records worldwide and has written songs for music greats, will also perform in August, as will platinum-selling singer-songwriter Paul Rodgers, who has sold more than 90 million records and is a founding member and main songwriter of several bands, including Free, Bad Company and The Firm.

Le Grand Cirque — Adrenaline
July 31-Aug. 16 (excluding Aug. 5, 12)
Tickets: Start at $20
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Aug. 20
Tickets: Start at $60
Andy Kim
Aug. 21, 22
Tickets: Start at $20
Paul Rodgers
Aug. 28, 29
Tickets: Start at $35
Tickets will be available starting at noon Friday at Fallsview Casino Box Office, or at all Ticketmaster outlets. Call Ticketmaster at 1-877-833-3110 or visit www.ticketmaster.ca.

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■ ENTERTAINMENT

Stray Theatre dusts off Ashes to Ashes

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

It's a small company hoping to make a big impression.

Stray Theatre of St. Catharines returns Thursday with its only show of the year, and as always, director Peter Feldman will make it count with a one-two punch of Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett.

Ashes to Ashes will be the company's first production since Daniel MacIvor's *Communion* last February.

"Our audiences are small but loyal," says Feldman, a former Brock University theatre professor who founded the company 12 years ago.

This year's offering consists of two short plays — Pinter's *Ashes to Ashes*, and Beckett's one-woman monologue *Rockaby* (which Stray Theatre did a few seasons back).

Both are perfect for an intimate audience, and will lead his cast down some dark roads.

WHAT: Ashes to Ashes
WHERE: Sullivan-Mahoney Courthouse, 101 King Street, St. Catharines
WHEN: May 7 to 17
TICKETS: $15 adults, $12 seniors/students. Matinees: Pay what you can 905-685-1937

Feldman recently discovered the Pinter play, and was eager to take a crack at it. He doesn't believe it has ever been staged in Niagara.

"It's a very challenging play," he says. "It's full of digressions and diversions."

The story begins with a man interrogating his wife over a former lover, but takes a harsh turn when she revisits a tragic story from her past.

"A theme begins to emerge, which is quite horrifying," says Feldman. "Sort of a *Sophie's Choice* situation. You begin to realize, maybe the play isn't about his interrogation of her, maybe it's about something else entirely."

The 40-minute play stars Pat Noonan and Ada Smith-Sparling.

JOHN LAW / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Stray Theatre founder Peter Feldman directs Ashes to Ashes, two one-act plays by Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett. It opens at the Sullivan-Mahoney Courthouse May 7.

For Beckett's *Rockaby*, Stray Theatre favourite Dawn Crysler speaks directly to the audience as an old woman facing the end of her life.

"She talks about wanting to find someone to tell her story to," says Feldman. "Beckett had this idea that you're never fully alive unless you're perceived by someone else."

It will be the company's final show at the Sullivan Mahoney Courthouse. Feldman hopes to relocate to the new First Ontario Performing Arts Centre, but he'll miss the intimacy of the old place.

"It's very user friendly, it's very audience friendly," he says. "And while costs have gone up, it's still just about affordable."

Either way, Feldman will continue sniffing out scripts to keep Stray Theatre unpredictable.

"It's great to still find plays that are challenging and intriguing," he says, adding it can be as simple as picking a book off a shelf one day and finding his next show.

"Except when you're searching for plays, it's not so simple. It's quite a search. I go to various book shops in Toronto and the other side of the border and look for scripts.

"I don't know whether *Ashes to Ashes* has been done in Canada, actually."

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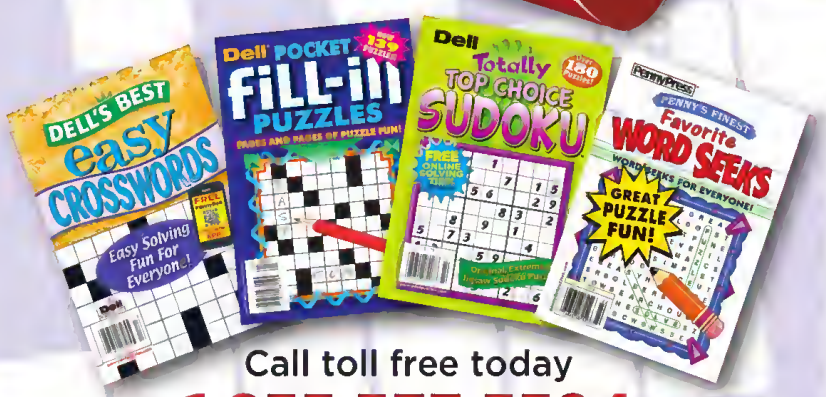

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TAYLOR, Gordon Joseph "Mike" - Passed away peacefully on Monday, May 4, 2015 at Lookout Ridge Retirement Home, in his 100th year. Born in Welland on April 25th 1918 to John "Jack" Taylor and Enzie (nee Attwood) Taylor. Predeceased by his wife Margaret (Peggy) Thomas (2000). Loving father of Lance Taylor (Lyn), Mark Taylor (Vanessa) and predeceased by his son Brent Taylor (1958). Cherished grandfather of Stacey Hall, Shelley DiRaddo (Mike), Sean Taylor, Brent Taylor and great-grandfather to Seth, Mitchell, Dylan, Jarrod, Evelyn, Madeline, Tanner, Logan, Brynn, Megan, Katie, Jacob, Matthew and Joshua. Member of the Fort Erie Board of Education 1957-59. Elected Councillor on Fort Erie Town Council 1960-66. Elected Deputy Reeve which also put him on Welland County Council in 1982. Elected Warden of Welland County in 1966, he was the first Warden to be born in Welland. Won the Nomination for the Progressive Conservative Candidate in 1967 but lost by 106 votes. Elected as the Regional Councillor for the enlarged Town of Fort Erie in October 1969. Was a member of the Regional Council Public Works Committee and also on of the two elected members on the Niagara Regional Board of commissioners of Police. Past member of the Board of Directors of Douglas Memorial Hospital, Niagara Parks Commission (2 terms). Past member of the Board of Directors, Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce. Past Master of the Fort Erie Masonic Lodge. He also had an impressive work history: Worked in Landis Machine Company as a machine operator, went to the U.S Headquarters in Waynesboro Pennsylvania during the war to Train machinists, then became a sales & service representative travelling Canada coast to coast. Worked for 3 years in the Page Hersey Tubes Ltd., in Welland where he helped set up Canada's first electric weld tube mills and trained the operators. Partner in the Peace Bridge Service Station in Fort Erie from 1949-58. They had the largest gallonage in the Niagara Peninsula. Production Manager at Monarch Massage Equipment Ltd. in Fort Erie from 1958-1980. Went to Sterilon Corporation a Gillette Subsidiary and supervised the opening of their operation in Niagara Falls. Went to Buffalo as Production Manager with 200 employees. Returned to Canada to work on Sales covering all hospitals in South Western Ontario. Returned to Monarch Massage as General Manager in 1985 in charge of Canadian operations and exports in Britain, Belgium, South Africa and Australia. Becoming Vice President in 1970. When he retired he put his passion for history and archaeology to work when he became manager of Old Fort. Friends will be received by the family at the **JAMES L. PEDLAR FUNERAL HOME,** 1292 Pelham Street, Fonthill on Thursday, May 7th from 2-4 and 7-9 pm (with a Masonic Service at 7:00 pm). The funeral service to Honour Mikes life will take place at Fonthill United Church, 42 Churchill, Fonthill on Friday, May 8th at 11:00 am. Interment will follow at Fonthill Cemetery. As an expression of sympathy, donations may be made to Canadian Cancer Society or the Fonthill United Church. Online condolences can be placed at

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